

Testimony in Support of  
HB 479  
from

**Grow Montana**

Strengthening our food & agriculture economy.

Grow Montana is working to remove the policy barriers that keep Montanans from buying Montana grown or processed food. We worked with the University of Montana in setting up their "Farm to College" program figuring out how to buy more Montana grown and processed food. The U of M has spent more than \$1 million on farms and ranches and food processors across the state. We are beginning similar programs in three other universities and colleges, and would like to expand into K-12.

One of the barriers we have found is that different equipment is needed. U of M had a tomato slicer for the rock hard, uniformly sized tomatoes that come off the truck after a 1,500 mile trip across the country. When they tried to run a fresh, vine ripened tomato from a local farm through this slicer, splat.

There are similar equipment barriers to selling local food to schools who are set up to sell processed food off the food service truck. To serve local food, they need "Grab & Go Carts." They need milk machines. HB 479 would help them do that. We urge your support.